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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing an audio or video data stream containing digital watermark data, comprising:

utilizing a playback unit for playing out information contained in the audio or video data stream; and

during playing by the playback unit, altering the audio or video information by applying to the audio or video data stream a predetermined mapping function associated with the playback unit to distort the audio or video, wherein

audio or video information produced by combining multiple audio or video data streams corresponding to said information, from different playback units, is distorted and the distortion of the produced audio information can be heard by a listener of the produced audio information or the distortion of the produced video information can be seen by a viewer of the produced video information, and

said video information comprises a video image embedded in a video data stream, and said video image is distorted during playback by a playback unit in accord with the predetermined mapping function by an amount ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to the viewer, but such that a video image produced by combining multiple video data streams reproduced by multiple different playback units is distorted and the distortion can be seen by the viewer.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said mapping function changes with time during playback of the video image by a playback unit.

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4. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said mapping function is selected randomly from among a plurality of mapping functions pre-stored in a playback unit.

5. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the image is distorted by the playback unit by compressing spacing between pixels in one direction and expanding spacing in another direction.

6. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said mapping function is changed upon scene change of said video image.

7. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 6, wherein the mapping function is changed in a first manner within a scene, and is changed in a second manner upon a scene change.

8. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said mapping function is defined by a geometric transformation.

9. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said mapping function is derived by backward warping of a two-dimensional geometric transformation of said video image.

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10. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said mapping function is derived by a three-dimensional geometric transformation of said video image.

11. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said mapping function is linear.

12. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said mapping function is quadratic.

13. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein said mapping function is a spline function.

14. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein a motion vector is applied to one or more pixels of said video image for image transformation.

15. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein the mapping function is obtained from a stored table.

16. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein the mapping function is obtained from a computed table.

17. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein different image transformations are performed in different regions of said video image.

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Claim 18 (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping changes with time during playback of the video image.

20. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple said video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is selected randomly from among a plurality of mapping functions pre-stored in a playback unit.

21. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

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a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

the image is warped by compressing spacing between pixels in one direction and expanding spacing in another direction.

22. (Previously Presented) A playback unit in accordance with claim 19, wherein said warping changes upon scene change of said video image.

23. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is defined by a geometric transformation.

24. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

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means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is derived by backward warping of a two-dimensional geometric transformation of said video image.

25. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is performed by a three-dimensional transformation of said video image.

26. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

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said warping is described by a linear function.

27. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is described by a quadratic function.

28. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream; and

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer, wherein

said warping is described by a spline function.

29. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream;

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means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer; and

means for applying a motion vector to pixels of said video image for image transformation.

30. (Currently Amended) A playback unit, comprising:

an input for receiving an encoded data stream bearing a video image;

a decoder for decoding the encoded data stream;

means for imparting a prescribed transformation to the video image for warping the video image in a manner, and by an amount, ~~not readily visible~~ visually imperceptible to a viewer such that a composite video image produced by multiple video playback units will be distorted and the distortion of the composite video image can be seen by the viewer; and

means for performing different image transformations in different regions of said video image.

Claims 31 - 61 (Cancelled)